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The CoHemispherical

UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO - MAYAGÜEZ CAMPUS

ASTROBIOLOGY

Searching for Signatures of Life: Moon, Planets, Mats and Microbial Models

The fourth Science and Technology CoHemis Conference (SciTeCC) took place on October 23, 2008. The main topic of the conference was **Astrobiology: Searching for Signatures of Life: Moons, Planets, Mats and Microbial Models**. SciTeCC 2008 had five speakers from Puerto Rico and the United States. The first talk was a video conference by Dr. Juan G. González Lagoa, Associate Director of the Resource Center for Science and Engineering at UPRM. He presented an overview and an introduction of the basic concepts of Astrobiology. The second conference was given by Dr. Liza Chizmadia, Associate Professor of the Department of Geology, UPRM. She talked about meteorites and comets as planets seedlings. Prof. Abel Méndez, Associate Professor of the Department of Physics at the University of Puerto Rico in Arecibo talked about measuring planetary habitability. The fourth conference



Panel of speakers

was offered by Dr. Tori Hoehler, Astrobiologist, Chemist and Oceanographer of the NASA-AMES Research Center. The last presentation was offered by the Dr. Pieter Visscher, Geochemist and Astrobiologist of the University of Connecticut. He talked about MATS as Microbial systems to study Astrobiology. After all presentations, the speakers answered questions from the audience. Definitely this activity placed us in perspective of the disciplines that have taken a main role in our technological world and served as a prelude of the International Year of Astronomy during in



<http://astrobiology.gly.bris.ac.uk/>

cohemis.uprm.edu/scitecc

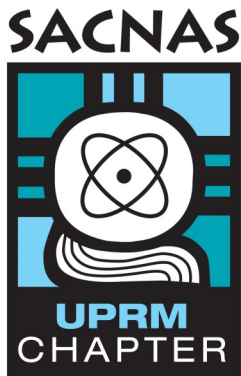
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Best model chapter for professional development and team work Nationwide

The Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Sciences (SACNAS) granted to SACNAS UPRM Chapter (CoHemis' student Organization) the award "2007-2008 Chapter Role Model Award for Outstanding Professional Development and Teamwork". The recognition was given to the awardees at the National Convention of SACNAS 2007-2008 in Salt Lake City, Utah. It is an award given to five outstanding chapters nationwide recognized for service, undergraduate and graduate research, professional development and team work, university support by faculty, and leadership. Receiving this award for our Institution means that among all the chapters at the United States of America, our chapter is one of the top five chapters, specifically in the area of professional development and team work.

Other Activities:

Second Semester
Academic Year 2008-2009

February

- ⇒ Segundo Simposio de Estudios del Pasado (EsPa)
- ⇒ Second GeMS-USDA Meeting

March

- ⇒ ArcGIS Technology Seminar

May

- ⇒ Sustainable Development Forum, Solid Waste
- ⇒ Bio-Tec Workshop

Summer

- ⇒ Summer Camp 2009: Science, Technology, Environment and Community Service
- ⇒ Weather Camp

Sixth Meeting of Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems

High Technology in Puerto Rico. Once again CoHemis promotes the use of high technology during the Sixth National Meeting of Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems of Puerto Rico (PRYSIG, for Spanish). This took place during November 14, 2008 at the UPRM Infirmary Amphitheatre. The program consisted of nine presentations and two workshops. The presentations included diverse subjects related to coastal environments, land use, ecological corridors, luminance contamination, hydrological studies and the GRAV-D project. Both afternoon workshops were presented by specialists of Geographic Mapping Tech-

nologies Corp. (GMT), focusing on the extraction of objects using ENVI and the techniques of spatial analysis using ArcGIS. According to CoHemis Director, Fernando Gilbes Santaella, "the nature of the presented work demonstrates the high multidisciplinary level of these tools. Once again it was demonstrated that the Puerto Rican society is gaining from these developments and applications. CoHemis is committed with this initiative and hope to continue it in the future". The CoHemis Director also announced that he has created an alliance with GMT to organize in UPRM an international conference on PRYSIG in 2010.

UNIVERSIDAD DE PUERTO RICO
RECINTO UNIVERSITARIO DE MAYAGÜEZ
CENTRO HEMISFÉRICO DE COOPERACIÓN

**SIXTA REUNIÓN NACIONAL
DE PERCEPCIÓN REMOTA Y
SISTEMAS DE INFORMACIÓN GEOGRÁFICA
DE PUERTO RICO**

14 de noviembre de 2008
Anfiteatro de Enfermería
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

cohemis.uprm.edu/prysig

cohemis.uprm.edu/prysig

Successful Biotechnology Summer Camp for third year

The enthusiasm was evident, young students and science teachers were ready to begin a different summer, a summer of biotechnology. It was the Summer Camp BETTeR-IC 2008, which took place during July of 2008 at our campus. With the motto *Learning Biotechnology as a Team and through Research and Interdisciplinary Centers*, the participants enjoyed one week of educational and recreational activities. For the third time, 32 high school students from local schools of the west region of the Island, local and international teachers, UPRM students from the Teacher Preparation Program, and UPRM graduate students, participated of the camp. According to Doctor Carlos Ríos Velázquez, CoHemis Co-Director, "one of the aspects that make this a unique camp is the integration between students and teachers, which allows enrichment in both directions. The teacher serves as mentor and at the same time they learn how the student perceives what biotechnology is. At the end, there is a product that the teacher can take to their school". Therefore, the activities were focused in demonstrating the

importance of team work as an academic and professional an essential tool. "It is active learning because the students learn by doing", continued doctor Ríos-Velázquez. Students and teachers had the opportunity to see the relation between biotechnology and other interdisciplinary fields like engineering, marine sciences and business administration. "One of the most important outcomes is that they recognize that there are no limits. No matter what professional area they are going to select, they can do biotechnology and be able to contribute to that community of knowledge by helping Puerto Rico going forward", expressed Ríos. The group visited the facilities of UPRM at Isla Magueyes, Lajas, and since it was the first complete residential summer camp, the days ended with group dynamics and recreational activities. In 2009, the main topic of the Summer Camp is: *Science, Technology, Environment and Community Service*. The camp will take place depending on funds raised. For more information about the summer camp or to become a sponsor, go to: cohemis.uprm.edu/summercamp.

